

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council  
Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2015  
Buena Vista, New Castle

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**Call to Order:** Senator Blevins, Chair, called the DVCC Quarterly meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

**Introductions:** In attendance were the following DVCC members: Senator Patricia Blevins, Dana Harrington Conner, Attorney General Matthew Denn, Commissioner Robert Coupe, Dawn Culp, Judge Carl Danberg, Diane Glenn, Chief Judge Chandlee Kuhn, Brendan O'Neill, Secretary Lewis Schiliro, and President Judge Jan Jurden. Also in attendance were Patricia Daily Lewis (DOJ), Timothy Collins (public), Renee Buskirk (DOC), Maureen Monagle (CJC), Addie Asay (Family Court), Tara Andrews (Family Court), Reggie Laster (NCCPD), Adrienne Owen (DSP), Jay Lynch (DHSS) and DVCC Staff Ellie Torres, Natasha Smith, Aimee String, Pat Kwetkauskie and Karen Ewing.

**Minutes:** A motion to approve the December 8, 2014 minutes as amended was made, seconded and the minutes were approved.

**Election of At-Large Members:** The statute requires that the Council elect at-large members at the first meeting of the calendar year. The at-large members continuing for another year are: Warden Wendi Caple'; Dana Harrington Connor, Dawn Culp; Diane Glenn; and Hon. Vincent Poppiti. One vacancy was created by Margaret Reyes who chose not to serve another year. Neda Biggs has agreed to serve, if elected. A brief summary of Ms. Biggs' experience was shared with the Council. Motion was made to vote on the at-large members by AG Denn and seconded by Brendan O'Neill. The at-large members were unanimously approved.

**Vote – Outstanding Community Service Award:** Liane Sorenson was nominated to receive the *2015 Outstanding Community Service Award* which will be presented during the Victims' Rights Proclamation in April. Motion to approve Liane Sorenson was made by Brendan O'Neill and Commissioner Coupe seconded the motion. The nomination was unanimously approved.

**Widener Symposium Update:** The Widener School of Law Symposium entitled "Strengthening & Protecting Families" is scheduled for April 17, 2015. This symposium will examine domestic violence as a significant family healthy policy issue, explore the legal and community response to intimate partner violence and advance improved outcomes for survivors and their children. National speakers have been confirmed and a DRAFT brochure has been developed. There is no cost for the event and Dana asked that everyone assist with publicizing the event.

**Presentation:** Tara Andrews gave an update on the Family Court Enhancement Project (FCEP). The FCEP identified two challenge areas to be addressed over the life of the grant. 1) There is concern and confusion about the propriety and implications of making parenting determinations in PFAs and about the appropriate use of DV information in custody cases and the interplay

between the two; 2) DV is often not identified in cases in which there is no PFA from Delaware in place, no criminal convictions in Delaware or no other domestic violence indicator in the court file.

In order to address these challenge areas, Family Court convened the Access to Justice and Differentiation Subcommittees. Each Subcommittee will work with the OVW technical assistance providers to conduct comprehensive scans of front-end resources available to litigants and case files involving PFAs and custody cases. These assessments will take place during the first six months of the Implementation Phase and will result in comprehensive recommendations for the Management Team's review and consideration.

Findings and recommendations from the subcommittees will be used to review and update Family Court policies and procedures and develop multidisciplinary trainings to institutionalize best practices.

There was discussion among Council Members regarding the Courts inconsistency surrounding custody orders when there is an active consent PFA. Updates from FCEP will continue.

**VAWA Update:** Per Maureen Monagle, the DVCC Criminal Justice Committee approved the distribution of \$44, 066.60 of reverted funds. Money will be distributed as follows:

- \$12,000 – Widener Symposium
- \$15,000 – WPD to handle unserved PFAs (officer overtime)
- \$10,000 – NCCPD to handle unserved PFAs (officer overtime)
- \$7,000+ – DSP to handle unserved PFAs (officer overtime)

**Service of Default PFA Orders:** Brendan O'Neill discussed an issue from the DVCC Criminal Justice Committee concerning how law enforcement and probation should handle default PFAs which have not been served. Two solutions were discussed: 1) DELJIS can add unserved PFA to the main screen to alert law enforcement of the unserved PFA and 2) Probation and Parole could serve PFAs during monthly check-ins with probation officers. It was discussed at length that there are not procedures in place to handle situations that will arise such as gun relinquishment, roadside printing of PFA orders and handling victims being physically present at the time of service. Brendan O'Neill will send a letter to the Police Chief's Council regarding having procedures outlined for serving PFAs during traffic stops. Renee Buskirk is working with Probation and Parole to handle the serving of active PFAs when it comes to the attention of the probation officer. Renee will have an update at the next Quarterly meeting.

### **Committee Updates:**

**DVCC Treatment Committee:** Commissioner Coupe mentioned that there are questions about the effectiveness of the Batterers' Intervention Programs in Delaware and nationwide. Currently, the length of the program varies between counties (or programs). The Treatment Committee will be working with the CJC to determine if grant funding is available for a program evaluation.

**DVCC Legislative Committee:** The DVCC will be sending Senator Margaret Rose Henry a letter outlining concerns with a gun violence bill which she is sponsoring. The DVCC will be

sponsoring a bill to extend the exparte orders from 10 days to 15 days which will allow additional time for service. Another bill will enable children to be protected by a PFA order when they are being harassed by former parents whose rights have been terminated.

**Fatal Incident Review Team:** Dana Harrington Conner stated that the FIRT team will meet for a full day to allow the team to review a case more thoroughly. They will conduct family interviews, compile details and screen for themes. The FIRT team will review fewer cases each year but will have a more complete picture of the domestic violence history and the trends.

**Public Comment:** Tim Collins, member of the public, made statements to the Council regarding his concerns that men are also victims of domestic violence.

**Next Meeting Date:** May 11, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.